

laid in the discussion concerns the possibility of some other over caring to hinder the islands if we abandon our option. It is, moreover, certain that, if the result is to say "proceed with the plan," we shall never know, but it is so openly by any other means. But then the estimate itself is doubtful, and the ulterior consequences are altogether beyond calculation. By assuming the sovereignty of these islands we should be embarking on a career which might lead to unexpected and most unwise events. Caffre wars and Maori wars, Jamaica troubles, and Colonial complications may come upon us just when we hoped to see the last of them. We are, therefore, accepting the climate and the situation there, nothing untrue in Fiji, but much that is threatening. We should find there what, by all accounts, is a lawless and turbulent element in a considerable white population, comprising, to aggravate the matter, adventurers of all nations. On the other hand, there are 100,000, or perhaps 200,000, natives, who are not, indeed, apparently giving much trouble at present, but who may, for want of work, be converted into Moors or Maoris by the proceedings indefinitely provided for in the constitution. Whether such an acquisition would really contribute anything to our wealth, prosperity, or power may be very reasonably doubted, though, perhaps, nations, like railway companies, may occasionally be driven to promising "extensions" to escape worse things. However, few will deny that Mr. Gladstone was amply justified in taking time for consideration and inquiry. If we understand the terms and submit ourselves to the propositus of the bargain. At present our information is very incomplete, and we might find easily enough, if we proceeded summarily to act upon it, that we had committed a costly and most inconvenient mistake.

JUDICIAL DIGNITY IN AMERICA.

The following strange story appeared in the New York *Standard*. It is calculated to give readers an idea of the dignified manner in which justice is administered at White Plains.

Recently Consul A. J. Hyatt, of White Plains, was summoned before Justice Long to show why he should not vacate a room over a military store used by him as an office. Mr. Hyatt asked for a subspace for a witness, and requested an adjournment.

The Court—"What do you want an adjournment for?"

Mr. Hyatt—"To arrange my defense."

The Court—"What is it?"

Mr. Hyatt—"I have a good defense."

The Court—"Jack Hyatt, you can't tell the truth—you are lying."

Mr. Hyatt—"No, I ain't lying either. I have a good defense."

The Court—"You are a liar. You know you have no defense."

Mr. Hyatt—"To arrange my defense."

The Court—"I am, eh?—Well, now, I'll show you that I'm descended enough to look you in the eye."

His honour descended from the beehive, and thrusting the lawyer, jammed him into a corner, and then shoved him into the street.

Mr. Hyatt—"It's all very nice for you to be so brave in your office, but just come on here and I'll take some of it out of you. I'll make you cry quits."

The Court—"I'll take that buster."

Out went the Court forthwith with the Chief of Police and a number of small boys.

Mr. Hyatt (as the Court, was about to seize him)—"Go away from here. Don't you hit me. I'm a lawyer, not a fighter."

The Court—"I thought you wanted to fight."

Mr. Hyatt—"Well, if you want to fight, just hit me, that's all. Then I'll lick you sure."

The Court made a motion toward Mr. Hyatt's head, and Mr. Hyatt darted down Railroad Avenue at an unerring speed.

At home, Mr. Hyatt's son opposite the Justice's office, but across the street, with a law-book under one arm and a bundle of manuscripts under the other, saying that he had prepared an order of arrest returnable in the Supreme Court against the justice on a charge of assault and battery. The justice insists that the dignity of his court must be maintained.

THE DUTCH WAR IN SUMATRA.

(To the Editor of the *Times*.)

Sir—You very kindly say in your article of yesterday that it must be unpleasantly clear to the Government of England and Holland how illusory were the expectations which tempted the diplomats on both sides to agree upon exchanging the right of England to veto territorial acquisitions by Holland in Sumatra against the Dutch possessions on the West Coast of Africa. The West Englishman is concerned with the right to conclude a general political error, from a naval and commercial point of view, than our Foreign Office has permitted, which is saying a great deal when one considers that a Minister of State is to be sent to the East Indies to make so called to the position of the strategical position of his country in time of war.

I particularly refer to the right we had under an old Treaty to forbid Holland to extend her territorial conquests over the whole island of Sumatra. That Treaty was negotiated by statesmen who through a long war had seen the importance and recognized the cost in blood and treasure of Great Britain keeping open her communications by water with all parts of the world.

In the course of the commercial country, this could be insured, experience has shown that we had a match for all Europe in arms against us, and having passed many years of my life as a naval officer, in the Eastern Archipelago and was beyond it, I have learnt to appreciate the wisdom and foresight of our past legislators in insuring by that Treaty with the Dutch, that one of the portals between the Indian Ocean and the rest of the world should be left as a safe port for the valuable and important commerce of Great Britain.

By keeping one side of the Straits of Malacca in our hands, and the opposite shore in those of the Sultan of Aceh and his dependent chief, that state became our highway in war time to Siam, China, Japan, and all the Eastern Archipelago, easily defended and without risk of a foreign Power establishing fortified ports where gunboats or *Admiral* might issue forth to cut us off. The abrogation of that Treaty with the Dutch entirely alters our position.

The possession of Aceh would give us, in effect, the keys of the Straits of Malacca, and put him in a strategical position to cripple our communications by sea with the eastern coast of Hindostan and the valley of the Ganges. It may be said what could such a little country as Holland now do against the power of England? I reply for "Holland," read "Germany," and then weigh the consequences.

If one will take the trouble to look at a map of the Eastern Hemisphere, he will be struck with the fact that all our commerce with the countries before mentioned, has to be carried through the Suez Canal or round the Cape of Good Hope, to concentrate at two or three gateways such as the Straits of the Malacca, Sunda, Hale, and Lombok, all of which, with one exception, are in the hands of a foreign Power. In the event of our being involved in an European war we should probably be compelled to put our Main Fleet to work in the Indian Ocean, and the rest of the world, and in the course of that we should be compelled to go through the Suez Canal or round the Cape of Good Hope, to concentrate at two or three gateways such as the Straits of the Malacca, Sunda, Hale, and Lombok, all of which, with one exception, are in the hands of a foreign Power.

To those who are ignorant of our immense commerce and shipping interest in the Indian Ocean, I will give a few figures, which will fall far short of the mark. We have vast local trade ramifying through all those countries of which there are few statistics.

In 1871 our Resident at Pekin put the British trade with China at £55,000,000, and the Board of Trade Return for 1863 shows 7,700 British ships entered and cleared out of Chinese ports, when the trade was much less than at present.

Some years ago our trade with the Straits Settlements in the Eastern Archipelago, as represented by a gross value of about 10,000,000 lbs., and the tonnage amounted to about 2,000,000 tons. These figures have subsequently multiplied very largely.

I leave others to estimate what such data mean with reference to the wealth of the country and the amount of our yearly revenue, but I would ask you whether the security of such an enormous commerce, our mail routes, and submarine telegraph communications,

ought to be put in jeopardy by the illusion of diplomatic or hasty action in our Foreign Office?

Yours truly,
EDWARD OSBORN,
Rear-Admiral,
London, July 11th.

ANOTHER CHAIRMAN.
(*London Gazette*, August 24.)

The *Indian Statesman* published the following startling paragraph. Should the statements contained in it be true, Bombay must be banished, for the case will be a variation from the most tiresome Parson cases—"The High Court of Bombay will very shortly have before it a 'Great Plaintiff Case,' involving a sum of not less than six millions sterling, now in the hands of Government. The plaintiff is an Armenian gentleman, highly connected, and an early day is fixed for the hearing."

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